

That is another debate for another day. I mention it only to demonstrate that issues related to international trade are complex, serious, and with real consequences for our economy and our people.

Participation in the WTO is vital to America's interest, be it economic, strategic, or to strengthen the rule of law in the world.

I would like to note while this rule provides for 2 hours of debate, that under our House rules, this resolution and other bills we debate under the procedures established by the Trade Act of 1974 are entitled to 20 hours of debate. While in this case, 20 hours is certainly not necessary, many Members of both parties in this Chamber have valid and important questions about whether our trade policymakers are protecting our interests.

I would hope that when other trade agreements come before this body, and they will, that Members will be able to fully debate the issues and not be limited by stringent time constraints.

I intend to vote against the underlying resolution because I believe that the WTO is essential to a strong rules-based trading system. I hope my colleagues would do as well.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of the time.

Mr. Speaker, American workers produce goods that are second to none. However, our success in selling these goods in a global marketplace, and we have to admit that we are in a global market, is dependent on fair and open markets. The World Trade Organization continues to advance and create more fair and open markets.

While I oppose the underlying bill, Members of the Congress should have the opportunity today to examine the merits of the United States' participation in the WTO. The debate on House Resolution 27 is an important one, and one that should be had.

So I urge my colleagues to support the rule, House Resolution 304, and to oppose the underlying bill.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The previous question was ordered.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2744, AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2006

Mr. PUTNAM. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 303 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 303

Resolved, That at any time after the adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 2744) making appropriations for Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2006, and for other purposes. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Appropriations. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. Points of order against provisions in the bill for failure to comply with clause 2 of rule XXI are waived except as follows: beginning with the colon on page 54, line 4, through "overseas" on line 9; section 749; page 81, lines 1 through 7; and beginning with "and" on page 81, line 11, through "programs" on line 17. Where points of order are waived against part of a paragraph or section, points of order against a provision in another part of such paragraph or section may be made only against such provision and not against the entire paragraph or section. During consideration of the bill for amendment, the Chairman of the Committee of the Whole may accord priority in recognition on the basis of whether the Member offering an amendment has caused it to be printed in the portion of the Congressional Record designated for that purpose in clause 8 of rule XVIII. Amendments so printed shall be considered as read. When the committee rises and reports the bill back to the House with a recommendation that the bill do pass, the previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD). The gentleman from Florida (Mr. PUTNAM) is recognized for 1 hour.

□ 1130

Mr. PUTNAM. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

(Mr. PUTNAM asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PUTNAM. Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 303 is an open rule providing for consideration of H.R. 2744, making appropriations for Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2006.

According to the rule general debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chairman and the ranking minority member of the Committee on Appropriations.

The rule waives all points of order against consideration of the bill, and waives all points of order against provisions in the bill for failure to comply with clause 2 of rule XXI, prohibiting unauthorized appropriations or legislative provisions in an appropriations

bill, except as specified in the resolution.

Under the rules of the House, the bill shall be read for amendment by paragraph. After general debate, the bill shall be considered for amendment under the 5-minute rule.

The resolution authorizes the Chair to accord priority in recognition to Members who have preprinted their amendments in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD and provides one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to present for consideration this open rule for the agriculture appropriations bill for fiscal year 2006. As with most all appropriations bills, the Committee on Rules has once again afford the entire Chamber an opportunity to offer any amendment to this legislation that complies with the rules of the House.

Members of the House are permitted to come to the floor and bring forth any idea or change they wish to see in this legislation. I am pleased that rule provides a chance for all of our Members to express their views on how our Nation should prioritize spending in this area.

Article 1, section 9 of the United States Constitution says, "No money shall be drawn from the Treasury but in consequence of appropriations made by law."

Our Founding Fathers established the role of the Committee on Appropriations to ensure that our Nation's spending is subject to oversight and approval by its elected representatives. The committee plays an important role in determining the wise use of taxpayer funds.

I want to commend the gentleman from Texas (Chairman BONILLA) and his subcommittee for the tremendously difficult work this year in bringing the spending bill under its budget allocation. The Congressional budget is an important tool of the Congress, allowing us to establish priorities for the coming fiscal year. It is always encouraging to see the budget and the appropriations process work together in tandem, allowing Congress to ensure that our government acts in a fiscally responsible manner.

The Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies of the Committee on Appropriations has reported out a bill that provides important resources to ensure that our Nation's farmers and ranchers remain competitive in the 21st century. The legislation enhances our ability to safeguard our food supply and addresses the nutritional needs of women and children and the most disadvantaged in our country. The bill also works to maintain and build fiscal discipline.

H.R. 2744 continues to fund important projects at a level consistent with fiscal year 2005, allocating nearly \$17 billion plus \$83 billion in total mandatory spending. At the same time, it addresses needs such as the protection of health and safety. In an effort to combat harmful pests and disease that

threaten America's food supply, the Food Safety and Inspection Service funding is increased by \$20 million over last year, and Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service activities are funded at \$16 million above last year's level, for a total of \$829 million.

In addition, the Farm Service Agency's salaries and expenses are funded at the President's request of \$1 billion, allowing the continued efficient delivery of farm and disaster programs that are so critical to wide swaths of our great Nation.

To unlock much-needed advances in agricultural research and allow American farmers to have the tools necessary to produce a safe and wholesome food supply, the Agricultural Research Service is funded at over \$1.1 billion.

Additionally, USDA's Conservation Operations activities are increased by \$26 million over the President's request, which allows farmers and ranchers to achieve important conservation and environmental goals as our Nation's farmers and ranchers are the original environmentalists in this country.

This appropriations bill is an excellent example of how Congress can attain fiscal discipline and still fund our priorities. H.R. 2744 funds programs over the President's budget request, increasing funding in strategic areas while maintaining a funding level consistent with funding for fiscal year 2005.

I am impressed with the work of the subcommittee, and I am certain the appropriations process this year will serve as a model of how we can achieve responsible and responsive funding simultaneously.

Mr. Speaker, I represent a congressional district in Florida that is among the top in the Nation in production of certain agricultural goods. I want to personally thank the gentleman from Texas (Chairman BONILLA) and the Subcommittee on Agriculture of the Committee on Appropriations and the subcommittee staff for their continued commitment and attention to the needs of all of American agriculture and Florida in particular, especially in the aftermath of the hurricanes that devastated much of Florida's agriculture last summer and fall. The Committee on Appropriations' work is greatly appreciated.

I also wish to thank the gentleman from Texas (Chairman BONILLA) for his attention and dedication to the continued needs resulting from invasive pests and diseases that are affecting a number of crops throughout our country, including citrus canker affecting our citrus industry in Florida. I know that all of America's farmers and ranchers and consumers deeply appreciate the subcommittee's tireless efforts to assist our agricultural community.

I urge Members to support this fair and open rule and the underlying bill.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

(Mr. McGOVERN asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. McGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Florida (Mr. PUTNAM) for yielding me the customary 30 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, passage of this rule will allow the House to consider the Agricultural, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill for Fiscal Year 2006.

I want to express my appreciation to the gentleman from Texas (Chairman BONILLA) and the subcommittee's new ranking member, the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO), for working so well together on this bill which clearly deserves the support of all the membership of this House.

This important bill provides the funding for our domestic nutrition and anti-hunger programs, international food aid, the Food and Drug Administration, and food inspection. Although traditionally the bill is not controversial, it is an important appropriations bill because of the vitally important programs that are supported here.

I want to express my strong support for the Department of Agriculture programs that fight to end hunger here at home and around the world. Mr. Speaker, hunger is a political problem, one that can be solved if only we have the political will to do so. Regrettably, the Bush administration and the leadership in this House and the Senate have not made the necessary commitments to reduce poverty and end hunger in our country. Indeed, hunger and poverty are once again on the rise in the United States. More children are going to bed hungry at night right here in the United States of America, the richest and most blessed country in the world. Every year six million children in our world die of hunger-related causes. We cannot and should not stand by and watch these tragedies unfold.

Mr. Speaker, it is time we raise the bar and pledge to end hunger once and for all. It is time to really tackle the issue of poverty. In the meantime, until we make that commitment and back it up with real action and greater resources, we must at least maintain funding for the domestic and international nutrition and anti-hunger programs in this bill. That is why it is so important that this bill increases funding for mandatory programs like food stamps and other child nutrition programs like the school lunch program.

I am also pleased that discretionary programs like WIC also receive increases. These programs are among the most successful of our Federal anti-hunger programs, and they help millions of Americans get the food they could not otherwise afford to buy.

Unfortunately, important programs like the summer food service program are not fully funded. This important program provides meals to low-income

children during the summer when they can not receive a school lunch because the schools are closed for summer vacation. There is no reason why a child who receives a lunch at school during the school year should be denied a lunch during the summer merely because school is out of session.

Another important program that needs to be expanded is the school breakfast program. Too many of our children begin their school days hungry. They cannot concentrate as well as children who have something to eat before class. Those children who are fortunate enough to receive a school breakfast usually have to get to school earlier than the other kids. There is a stigma that gets attached to these children because it is plain for all the students to see who cannot afford to eat breakfast at home.

We need to expand the school breakfast program so that it is a truly universal program, and we must provide school breakfast at the start of the school day and not before. These two simple actions will ensure that a nutritious meal is provided to hungry children without attaching any social stigma. The consequences of such basic changes will be measurable increases in learning and test scores, as well as improvements in health.

A third program that needs to be fully funded is the effort to end the reduced price meal. Currently, low-income children are eligible for either a free school lunch or a reduced price lunch. The reduced price lunch costs 40 cents per meal. While that may not seem like a lot to you or me, it can put a real strain on the finances of many low-income families who are struggling to make ends meet. Too often, school lunch administrators report seeing children who are able to buy lunch at the beginning of the month stop eating as the month goes on, merely because their families cannot afford to pay for that reduced price lunch as money gets tighter and tighter towards the end of the paycheck.

The Child Nutrition Reauthorization Bill, a truly bipartisan bill that was signed into law last year, phases out the reduced price meal. Last year, thousands of anti-hunger activists roamed the halls of Capitol Hill with their blue and white ERP buttons on, and Congress responded. Now it is time to back up that promise and fully fund the effort to end the reduced price meal.

Mr. Speaker, the fiscal year 2006 bill also provides funding for the International Food Aid Programs administered by the USDA. These programs provide emergency food aid to regions of the world that need help today. I am pleased that President Bush pledged to release \$674 million for humanitarian relief on the Horn of Africa. However, while it is important that the United States provide the funding for humanitarian relief around the world, the Committee on Appropriations must ensure that these funds are replenished for the following year.

Unfortunately, this bill underfunds the Food for Peace Program, which is one of our most important food aid and development programs. I commend the gentleman from Texas (Chairman BONILLA) for restoring \$222 million to this program above the President's request. But the program still remains \$60 million below last year's level. While emergency funding was included in the tsunami relief package, we should not rely on emergency funding when we can properly fund this important program in the Agriculture Appropriations bill. Nor should we short-change funding for the ongoing programs that are funded through the Food for Peace and other international food aid programs.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I also want to commend the gentleman from Texas (Chairman BONILLA) and the ranking member, the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO), for increasing funding for the George McGovern-Robert Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program. This program uses American commodities to provide school meals to hungry children around the world. It is named after two men who have led the fight against child hunger while they served in the United States Senate and as private citizens.

Senator George McGovern is a dear friend of mine who has worked tirelessly on ending hunger over his decades of public service, and I cannot say enough about Senator Bob Dole's work on combating hunger here and abroad. He is a man of great integrity and someone who I respect immensely. I am very pleased, Mr. Speaker, to have the opportunity to work with his wife, Senator ELIZABETH DOLE, on a number of anti-hunger efforts.

The McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program is based on our own school lunch and breakfast program. It provides a nutritious meal for hungry children in a school setting. It has resulted in not only reducing child hunger abroad but in better schools and stronger community support for education in some of the poorest communities in the world. It is a successful program that is developing the long-term support of the Bush administration, and it deserves to be expanded.

I am pleased that the Bush administration and the leadership in the House and Senate agree on the importance of the McGovern-Dole program. The President's budget has included an increase in funding for this program over each of the last 3 years; and, more importantly, the Congress has agreed in increased funding over the past 3 years.

Mr. Speaker, while I believe the funding must be restored to \$300 million, the original level of the Global Food for Education Initiative, the pilot program that preceded the McGovern-Dole program, I am pleased that the gentleman from California (Chairman LEWIS) and the gentleman from Texas (Chairman BONILLA) have supported

the President's request for increased funding of \$100 million for fiscal year 2006.

I am also encouraged by the level of commitment to the McGovern-Dole program in the Senate, and I am hopeful that funding for this program will be further increased when the Senate considers this bill later this year.

Mr. Speaker, in December of 2004, 105 of our House colleagues sent a bipartisan letter to President Bush supporting the McGovern-Dole program. That letter is as follows:

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
Washington, DC, December 2, 2004.

Hon. GEORGE W. BUSH,
President of the United States,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: We are writing to urge you to provide \$300 million in your Fiscal Year 2006 Budget Proposal for the George McGovern-Robert Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program. We believe it is urgent to restore funding for this program at levels similar to those of the original pilot program.

We strongly believe this funding is critical for sustaining and expanding the McGovern-Dole Program in order to combat terrorism and to help build and consolidate democracy in the Middle East, southern Asia, the Near East, and in other regions critical to U.S. national security. As you are aware, the McGovern-Dole Program provides donations of U.S. agricultural products, as well as financial and technical assistance, for school feeding and maternal and child nutrition programs in low-income countries. We note that recommendations made by the General Accounting Office (GAO) in February 2002 on how to strengthen and improve the administration and implementation of school feeding programs were fully integrated into the law establishing the McGovern-Dole Program, enhancements that we believe have contributed to its current success.

Both the initial pilot program and the current McGovern-Dole Program have a proven track record at reducing the incidence of hunger among school-age children and improving literacy and primary education, especially among girls, in areas devastated by war, hunger, poverty, HIV/AIDS, and the mistreatment of women and girls. School meals, teacher training, and related support have helped boost school enrollment and academic performance. McGovern-Dole nutrition and school feeding programs also improve the health and learning capacity of children both before they enter school and during the years of primary and elementary school.

In February 2003, the U.S. Department of Agriculture evaluated the McGovern-Dole pilot program and found significant positive results. Specifically—

“The results to date show measurable improvements in school enrollment, including increased access by girls. In projects involving more than 4,000 participating schools, the WFP reports an overall enrollment increase exceeding 10 percent, with an 11.7 percent increase in enrollment by girls. The PVO's report an overall enrollment increase of 5.75 percent in GFE-participating schools. In some projects, increases in enrollment were as high as 32 percent compared with enrollment rates over the previous three years.”

(USDA, The Global Food for Education Pilot Program: A Review of Project Implementation and Impact, page 2, February 2003)

We firmly believe that these programs reduce the risk of terrorism by helping to eliminate the hopelessness and despair that

breed terrorism. American products and commodities are directly associated with hunger alleviation and educational opportunity, encouraging support and good will for the United States in these communities and countries.

We strongly urge that you restore the capacity of this critically important program by providing \$300 million for Fiscal Year 2006.

Sincerely,

James P. McGovern, Nancy Pelosi,
James A. Leach, Hilda L. Solis, Todd Tiahrt, Ike Skelton, Jo Ann Emerson,
Frank R. Wolf, Tom Lantos, Donald A. Manzullo, Earl Pomeroy, Marcy Kaptur, John Shimkus, George Miller,
Roger F. Wicker, Rosa L. DeLauro,
Lynn C. Woolsey, Anthony D. Weiner,
Chris Van Hollen.

Neil Abercrombie, Ron Kind, Sam Graves, José E. Serrano, Albert R. Wynn, Robert Wexler, Maxine Waters, John F. Tierney, Gary L. Ackerman, Robert E. Andrews, Earl Blumenauer, Leonard L. Boswell, Corrine Brown, Michael E. Capuano, Elijah E. Cummings, William D. Delahunt, Bob Etheridge, Tammy Baldwin, Madeleine Z. Bordallo.

Rick Boucher, Sherrod Brown, Joseph Crowley, Susan A. Davis, Michael F. Doyle, James L. Oberstar, John W. Oliver, David E. Price, Bobby L. Rush, Bernard Sanders, Janice D. Schakowsky, Vic Snyder, Eni F. H. Faleomavaega, Barney Frank, Donald M. Payne, Steven R. Rothman, Martin Olav Sabo, Max Sandlin, Adam Smith, Fortney Pete Stark.

Bob Filner, Charles A. Gonzalez, Raul M. Grijalva, Stephanie Herseth, Tim Holden, Eddie Bernice Johnson, Rick Larsen, Stephen Lynch, Karen McCarthy, Jim Marshall, Alcee L. Hastings, Maurice D. Hinchey, Sheila Jackson-Lee, Dale E. Kildee, Barbara Lee, Carolyn McCarthy, Carolyn B. Maloney, Jim Matheson, Betty McCollum.

Michael R. McNulty, Gregory W. Meeks, Dennis Moore, Richard E. Neal, Jim McDermott, Sam Farr, Christopher H. Smith, Martin T. Meehan, Juanita Millender-McDonald, James P. Moran, Eleanor Holmes Norton, Thaddeus G. McCotter, Major Owens, Linda T. Sánchez, Thomas H. Allen, Doc Hastings, Patrick J. Kennedy, Edward J. Markey, Brad Miller, and Sander M. Levin.

Mr. Speaker, the following is a letter from Secretary of Agriculture Mike Johanns expressing his support for the McGovern-Dole program:

Hon. JAMES P. MCGOVERN,
House of Representatives, Cannon House Office Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN MCGOVERN: Thank you for the letter of December 2, 2004, from you and your colleagues to President George W. Bush, expressing your support for the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program (FFE). The White House forwarded your letter to the Department of Agriculture (USDA) for reply. We apologize for the delay in responding.

This Administration greatly appreciates your support for this very successful program. USDA now has 5 years of experience with FFE and its predecessor, the Global Food for Education Initiative. These programs have reached over 7 million beneficiaries and provided close to 1.3 million tons of agricultural commodities as well as other types of assistance to schools and communities. The positive results include increased school enrollment, especially among

girls; declines in absenteeism; improved concentration, energy, and attitudes toward learning; and infrastructure improvements, including classrooms, kitchens, storage facilities, water systems, latrines, and playgrounds.

We are especially gratified that FFE has resulted in greater local commitment to school feeding activities. In many cases, FFE activities have been so successful that local support for school feeding is expanding to the point that FFE assistance can shortly be ended. Examples of these "graduating" countries are Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Moldova and Vietnam. We will continue to allocate some FFE resources to these countries this year as we expand the benefits of FFE by implementing programs in additional countries. Additionally, the success of FFE has resulted in other donors becoming involved in school feeding programs. These other donors include the European Union, the German Agency for Technical Cooperation, the Japanese Development Agency, Canada, and the World Health Organization.

We agree that funding for FFE should be expanded in fiscal year (FY) 2006. While the Administration is making a concerted effort to cut the budget deficit, we have requested \$100 million in appropriated funding for FFE in FY 2006, which is double the funding for the program in FY 2004 and an increase of 15 percent compared to FY 2005.

Thank you again for writing to support this important program. We look forward to continuing to work with you to improve USDA's overseas food aid programs. A similar letter has been sent to each of your colleagues.

Sincerely,

MIKE JOHANNIS,
Secretary.

Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from Texas (Chairman BONILLA) has crafted a bill that deserves to be supported today; and while there is room for improvement, I believe that the gentleman from Texas (Chairman BONILLA) and the ranking member, the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO) and the Subcommittee on Agriculture of the Committee on Appropriations did the best they could with the limited resources they were given. Again, I thank my friend from Florida (Mr. PUTNAM).

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PUTNAM. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from Massachusetts' (Mr. MCGOVERN) comments about hunger remind me of an old proverb. "When there is food, there are many problems. When there is no food, there is only one problem." The gentleman speaks very passionately about that issue. It reminds me how fortunate we are that, because of the productivity of the American farmer and rancher, that Americans spend less of their disposable income on food than any other industrialized nation and our greatest threats in terms of childhood illnesses is obesity, not hunger. And I would not trade our problem for anybody else's.

It is clearly a huge issue. I am proud of the work the appropriators have done in allocating \$900 million through the emergency bill for those who were ravaged by the tsunami that struck southeast Asia.

□ 1145

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 5 minutes to the distinguished gentlewoman from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO).

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Florida for yielding me the time, and I rise in strong support of the rule and the underlying legislation.

The Agriculture appropriations bill is being considered under an open rule that allows all Members to offer their amendments to this important piece of legislation, and I believe that all Members should be able to support this rule.

I commend the gentleman from Texas (Chairman BONILLA) and the other members of his committee for their work on this very important legislation. I would like to highlight a few of the provisions of particular importance to my district of West Virginia.

Resource conservation and development councils across the country, including the Potomac Headwaters and Little Kanawha councils in my district, leverage very successfully Federal, State and local money with private sector dollars to support conservation and economic development activities in our rural communities. I think it is important to note that anytime a successful collaboration between all of the different governmental entities and private sector dollars is able to achieve results that we should recognize that, and I am pleased that this bill does so.

These local councils have years of experience with development and conservation issues and understand the needs of our home areas. The heartfelt letters and phone calls that I receive from constituents and community leaders across West Virginia demonstrate the good work that RC&D councils are doing. I thank the Committee on Appropriations for rejecting the plan to end the Resource Conservation and Development program and instead fully fund the local councils at last year's level.

Also, I want to thank the committee for restoring formula funds for the Hatch Act, the McIntire-Stennis program, and the Animal Health Disease program and rejecting proposals to turn these funds into competitive grants.

West Virginia University has a very successful extension service that does an outstanding job of researching problems facing farmers in my State and across the Nation. Every State has an extension service devoted to solving agriculture programs in their local areas.

Switching to a competitive grant system would have jeopardized the ability of local extension services to deal with local plant disease or animal health problems.

This appropriations bill also provides a \$630 million increase for the Child Nutrition program. In West Virginia, my home State, 145,000 children received free or reduced school lunches this past year. That is more than half

of our State's K through 12 total enrollment. It is important that we maintain this funding for this important program.

For these reasons and many others, I think it is extremely important that not only do we pass the rule but we also pass the good hard work of the Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies, and their efforts to preserve and enrich the programs that are feeding not only our country but other countries and developing the research to find other ways to maximize our resources.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Before I yield to our next speaker, I would just like to respond to something the gentleman from Florida had said in his comments on hunger.

As I should point out to the gentleman, there are 36 million people in the United States of America who are hungry, and every single one of us in this Chamber should be ashamed of that fact. We can do better.

He mentioned the problem of obesity. I should point out to the gentleman that there is a relationship, believe it or not, between malnutrition and hunger and obesity. A lot of the cases of obesity are directly related to the fact that a lot of families cannot afford to put a decent meal on the table. So these kids end up eating junk food, and it results in the obesity problem.

We have a huge problem here. We should not minimize it, and we have a long way to go.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 6½ minutes to the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO), the ranking Democrat on the subcommittee.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Massachusetts for yielding me time and for all the effort and attention the committee has paid to this important bill on agriculture and the Food and Drug Administration.

I just might say to the gentleman from Massachusetts, I, too, want to applaud his passion and his diligence and vigilance on the issue of hunger and how it affects our children and families in the United States and internationally. I thank him for leading the way for us.

I also want to compliment the gentleman from Texas (Chairman BONILLA) on working under very difficult circumstances to deliver this bill on the floor and for working across the aisle. His staff, the gentleman from Wisconsin's (Mr. OBEY) staff and mine have worked diligently to get us here today, and I thank all of them for their service and for their patience.

This bill, unfortunately, falls short in filling the needs in rural America and in fully protecting our public health. While I believe that the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BONILLA) has done his best with a difficult allocation, regrettably there are shortfalls. We have barely maintained the same

funding level as last year, \$16.8 billion, in discretionary funds; and we all know that there are increased benefit costs and salary increases that need to be accounted for in that number. A stable number does not mean a stable agriculture and food and drug effort by our government.

The chairman had to make up for a huge gap in the administration's proposal when it included an unauthorized user fee of \$139 million in the budget. Finding that amount of money to keep our extremely important food safety efforts for meat and poultry operating was not an easy task. It certainly forced the chairman to leave other needs unmet at USDA.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, the bill still does not include enough funding to cover the food security needs of the elderly under the Commodity Supplemental Food program. There are hundreds of millions more pending requests for building and repairing water and sewer systems and for conserving our precious soil and water resources.

The Commodity Supplemental Food program operating in 32 States and providing surplus food commodities to seniors and to families of young children who no longer qualify for any other help, but who have hungry young ones to feed, is predicted to have to stop feeding at least 45,000 people with the current level of funding in this account.

At the same time, USDA resources are essential so that our agricultural base is not harmed by outbreaks of diseases such as soybean rust or bovine spongiform encephalopathy, BSE or mad cow. United States agriculture is not isolated, and we need to remain vigilant and steady in our support of scientific research institutions in our prevention efforts and in our strategic planning and coordination for these types of challenges to our food supply and our health.

In the natural resources area, the bill is \$52 million below last year. Water and waste grants, so critical to public health and economic growth for our rural communities, are funded below 2004.

The agriculture community has so many important needs, from commodity support to export promotion, from building new community facilities in rural areas to conserving farm land, and by combating animal and plant diseases and protecting human health, by enforcing our food safety laws and maintaining basic nutrition for our citizens. Rural areas are not always places with high tax bases and young working people. Rather, we know 90 percent of the country's poorest counties are in rural America, and these counties have a poverty rate that is a disturbing 14.2 percent. If we want these areas to begin to prosper again, we have to help them with infrastructure and community-building.

Some forget that another important public health agency is also funded in this bill, the Food and Drug Adminis-

tration within the Department of Health and Human Services. Again, the chairman has done a good job in trying to find funding for this budget for the Food and Drug Administration.

This year, the subcommittee was deprived of the opportunity to hear from the Acting Commissioner of FDA due to what we understand was intervention from the administration. This meant that we had to work on their portion of the bill without being able to ask questions that we would ordinarily have used to learn about their current operations. Nevertheless, with the gentleman from Texas' (Mr. BONILLA) help, we have started down a road to building some additional resources for drug safety and the possibility of more effective oversight of postmarket prescription drugs, by increasing the resources of the office that performs direct-to-consumer advertising claims reviews.

FDA is an agency that has demonstrated itself to be in crisis over the last year. We had an influenza outbreak predicted, but we were surprised to learn that another government's regulatory system had found the flu vaccine supply on which we were counting to be flawed.

Drugs like Vioxx and Bextra that scientists at FDA knew were causing illness and death were permitted to remain on the market and be advertised well beyond the point that they should have been voluntarily withdrawn or forced off the market.

Companies that had promised to perform postmarket studies in return for early introduction of their products failed miserably in keeping their promises without penalty.

However, I am pleased that the subcommittee took action on this matter by fencing off 5 percent of the appropriation to the leadership offices of FDA until the head of the agency testifies before our subcommittee. This is a very important provision to maintain in this bill until we get some answers.

I am also pleased that the subcommittee adopted an amendment addressing the reimportation of FDA-approved prescription drugs from FDA-approved facilities from Canada and other developed countries so that our people can buy them at affordable prices. This House has expressed its will on this issue over and over again, most recently with a letter signed by a bipartisan majority of the House to the Speaker, and we want to be able to keep this provision in the bill through conference.

I thank the gentleman from Texas (Chairman BONILLA) for his willingness to work across the aisle to replace many of the cuts sent up by the President. We know that we cannot meet all the actual needs that are out in the country; but this bill is a valiant effort, given the budget parameters.

I know there will be several amendments offered today, especially on behalf of enhanced civil rights and solutions to regional or specific problems. I

believe that debate will be a healthy one, and I look forward to it.

I thank the gentleman for yielding me the time.

Mr. PUTNAM. Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT), our distinguished majority whip.

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me time, and I rise today in support of the rule and in support of the gentleman from Texas' (Chairman BONILLA) efforts on the underlying bill.

I also in my remarks today want to urge my colleagues to retain the chairman's language on mandatory country-of-origin labeling, more commonly known as COOL, C-O-O-L. This is clearly a marketing issue, not a food safety issue, and puts an unnecessary burden on producers, processors, and consumers if not handled in exactly the right way.

The Agriculture Department has estimated the costs of the current mandatory country-of-origin labeling program could be as much as \$4 billion in the first year alone. Assuming that producers figure out a way to pass along that \$4 billion, that \$4 billion is \$4 billion added at grocery stores to shopping-cart prices, and then they talk about a cost of several hundred million dollars a year in the years after the first year.

With so many unanswered questions, now is not the time for this mandate. For example, when COOL goes into effect beginning on September 30, 2006, how will we treat the cattle, hogs and lambs and sheep that were born before that date? Is there any legal market for these hundreds of thousands of animals that are out there on farms and in farming facilities right now? Until we find out the answer to problems like this, there is no reason to move forward with this costly mandate that puts a disproportionate share of the cost on the producer.

A much better approach is for Congress to approve a voluntary program and place control in the hands of consumers at the marketplace. It is for this reason that I have joined the fight with the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE), who is our Committee on Agriculture authorizing chairman, on our voluntary country-of-origin legislation that would permanently make the country-of-origin legislation a voluntary program for meat and meat products, not, Mr. Speaker, for vegetables, for fruit, for other products, but for meat and meat products, products that have a longer life, products that are more mobile, and products that in many cases are going to be already in the hands of producers, on the farms of producers before September 30, 2006, with potentially no legal way to sell those products.

Voluntary labeling, on the other hand, would give producers added market value rather than a costly Federal mandate. Voluntary COOL would ultimately give consumers, not the Federal Government, control of country-

of-origin labeling for products. The voluntary labeling program would add value throughout the food chain, including the producer as well as the consumer.

□ 1200

Voluntary COOL would also create a brand for products of the United States and encourage consumers to buy American meats where they shop. The label would add value to American agricultural products. Voluntarily labeling beef, pork, lamb and other meat products is a better way to need the needs of consumers and promote American agricultural products without the enormous costs and burdens of a mandatory law.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman's work product, the bill which has been brought to the floor, and the hard work he has done on this issue and urge my colleagues to support the chairman's efforts.

Mr. McGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 6 minutes to the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. SLAUGHTER).

(Ms. SLAUGHTER asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, as we debate the agriculture appropriations bill today, we will consider funding for the Food and Drug Administration. I am very disappointed that the Hinchey FDA reform amendment will not be allowed under this rule. The amendment would give the Food and Drug Administration two new authorities that are badly needed to improve the FDA's drug safety operations and ensure that FDA has the tools to take timely action to protect Americans from unsafe drugs.

It would have empowered the FDA with the authority to require companies to conduct post-marketing studies of FDA-approved drugs and would also have given the FDA the authority to mandate changes to the labels of FDA-approved drugs. Unfortunately, efforts to include the amendment were defeated in the Committee on Rules on a party-line vote.

I am deeply concerned about the FDA's handling, or rather their mishandling, of the consideration to allow emergency contraception to be sold over the counter. For almost 100 years, the FDA has overseen the safety of food, cosmetics, drugs, and medical devices consumed by the American public, but we cannot trust them unconditionally any more.

The agency defines itself as a scientific, regulatory and public health agency. But for what appears to be the first time in the agency's history, the FDA has jettisoned the rigorous standards of science and health in evaluating emergency contraception and has instead taken the counsel of religious and political extremists in its consideration of this important pregnancy-preventive drug.

And the results of such counsel have been predictable. Despite the fact that

23 of 27 members of the FDA's advisory panel voted in favor of allowing over-the-counter sales of Barr Laboratories' Plan B emergency contraceptive and despite the overwhelming scientific evidence in support of the application, the FDA made the unusual decision to disregard its own advisory panel's recommendation and reject the application.

One of the dissenting panelists was evangelical conservative Dr. W. David Hager. In October of 2002, I sent a letter to President Bush expressing my deep reservations about appointing Dr. Hager as Chair of the Advisory Committee for Reproductive Health Drugs at the FDA. Based on Dr. Hager's past conduct, I believed he would not be impartial in his decisions. On numerous occasions, Dr. Hager had already displayed a willingness to substitute his personal beliefs for science. My request, unfortunately, went unheeded by the administration.

Now recent reports have alleged that the FDA, while considering allowing over-the-counter sales of emergency contraceptive, requested a minority opinion by Dr. Hager to justify a politically motivated decision to Barr Laboratories' application, a truly outrageous request which, if true, has further jeopardized the scientific integrity of the FDA.

Clearly the standards of science and the interest of public health have taken a back seat to the political agenda of extremist politicians.

The scientific facts irrefutably show that emergency contraception is a safe and effective way for women to prevent unintended pregnancies. Emergency contraception has been available in the United States by prescription since the late 1990s. It does not cause abortion. Instead, it stops the release of the eggs from the ovary and prevents unwanted pregnancy. If preventing unwanted pregnancy is something we support, no matter what our individual positions are on a woman's reproductive freedom, we should be outraged by this lack of science behind this decision.

Effectively preventing unwanted pregnancies is clearly the best way to reduce the number of abortions, and if my colleagues care about that, they must recognize this fundamental truth.

The Alan Guttmacher Institute estimates that increased use of emergency contraceptives accounted for up to 43 percent of the total decline in abortions between 1994 and the year 2000. In addition, emergency contraception is often the only option for the 300,000 women who are raped each year. It is widely recognized as an integral part of comprehensive and compassionate emergency treatment for sexual assault survivors.

The bottom line here is that over-the-counter approval is the single most effective tool we have to reduce unwanted pregnancies in America, but one man is holding it up. Anyone really serious about reducing the number of abortions will support making it avail-

able. There are two only sides of this line Members can be on. They either want to stop apportionments or reduce them, or they do not.

As we await again a decision on Barr Laboratories, a decision the FDA promised in January but has not given us yet, I urge them to base this and future decision on science, not politics. It is time the FDA recognizes it must be more accountable to the American public to make the best decisions possible based on scientific evidence which is what they are for. They just do not do that anymore.

Mr. PUTNAM. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. McGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. OBEY).

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, this Congress is owned lock, stock and barrel by the pharmaceutical industry. That was made obvious on passage of the so-called Medicare drug benefit last year when the majority party rammed through this place, after a 3-hour wait, a provision which prevented the Federal Government from negotiating with the drug industry to require lower drug prices under the Medicare program.

Another piece of evidence of the ownership of this Congress by that industry is the fact that this House will not be voting today on an amendment that would give the FDA the enhanced ability to change the label on drugs that have already been approved if later studies demonstrate that those labels need to be changed.

I had a member of my family who almost died because of Vioxx. She took that drug at the suggestion of a doctor, and it virtually ruined her liver. She does not drink alcohol, and yet when the doctor examined her he told her that she effectively had the liver of a 65-year-old chronic alcoholic because of what Vioxx had done to her.

It took 14 months for the FDA to be able to change Vioxx labeling.

Any Congress with any guts whatsoever would have had on this floor a long time ago legislation to give FDA that authority, but that is a big money lobby, and they sure pass it around. Last year, they had 500 lobbyists telling this Congress what to do on the Medicare prescription drug bill. They may as well have had a baby-sitter for every Member of Congress. That is how many lobbyists they had running around Capitol Hill.

On that bill on that issue, instead of being the greatest legislative body in the world, Capitol Hill was effectively a trash heap.

I intend to vote for this bill because I think the chairman has done a reasonable job with limited resources, but I do not intend to vote for this rule if there is a rollcall because I think this rule should have made the Hinchey amendment in order. It is about time that this institution and the President of the United States starts talking about and dealing with issues that the American people care about, rather

than issues that we care about in terms of our internal operations, such as the filibuster in the Senate or these other nonsense issues that are really inside baseball.

Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to get that off my chest so in case there is a rollcall on the rule, Members will know why I voted against it.

I also want to raise one other point. We are not starting on the bill itself until some time after 12. We had other filler on the floor here today before we got to this appropriations bill. There are 11 must-pass bills a session, all of them appropriation bills. We have been asked on the minority side of the aisle, even though we regard most of those bills as being inadequate, we have been asked to provide procedural cooperation in order to facilitate the ability of the majority to do the House's work, and we have provided that procedural cooperation. But I have to say I get very frustrated when we are told that the Committee on Appropriations has to be prepared to work until 10 or 11 tonight because you have certain Members of Congress off on a golfing tournament this morning and early this afternoon.

I resent the fact that there are not going to be any votes until after 2 so a few of our colleagues can go off and golf while we are here trying to slog through the 11 appropriation bills that have to pass before this Congress can adjourn. I do not raise that fact because I am a lousy golfer, although I am. I raise that fact simply because sooner or later it would be nice if this place puts the public's business first and puts appropriation bills first rather than dragging in other legislation that is put on the floor simply to delay the time before the Committee on Appropriations gets to the amendment stage of its bills.

So, with all due respect, I will vote for this bill, but I think the process by which we have gotten to this bill is a sorry one.

Mr. PUTNAM. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Respecting the gentleman's right to get off his chest whatever he chooses to get off of his chest, I would point out that the appropriations process is far ahead of schedule, and we are on track to complete the program of passing the bills through the House before July 4.

I would also point out our appreciation to the gentleman for his support for the bill and recognition of the hard work the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BONILLA) and his subcommittee have put in to an outstanding agriculture appropriation bill, and appreciate the fact that, despite his misgivings about the process, he likes the work product that this committee has produced.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER).

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time to speak on the rule.

I favor the rule. It will enable us today later in the debate to consider an amendment that, if approved, will reduce by 6 percent the sugar subsidy that we have under our current system.

We will hear in the course of this debate how the current sugar subsidization is a serious misallocation of resources to a few large farmers and agribusiness interests when we are unable to meet the needs under the ag bill for America's small- and medium-sized farmers.

We will learn how the current policies damage the environment, especially in the Everglades. The Everglades are polluted from the practice of cane sugar production, threatening drinking water for south Florida, maritime habitat is seriously damaged, and makes the \$8 billion down payment that we have made on the cleanup of the Everglades harder, larger and ultimately more expensive.

The current policies violate our own principles of free trade. Forty-one other sugar-producing countries cannot compete with the lavishly subsidized American market, where they are largely excluded, particularly for poor countries. It makes our free trade arguments hypocritical.

□ 1215

It is costing American consumers with this unjustified subsidy, forcing them to pay two or three times the world price for sugar. And it is costing jobs. There are seven times more businesses that use sugar than produce sugar and is forcing them, I see my colleague from Illinois here, where the confectionery industry in Illinois is being driven across the border to Canada because the raw material is so much cheaper.

There will be an opportunity, thankfully, to discuss this under an open rule, and I am hopeful that we will take this small step to put a little sanity in the way we treat sugar.

Mr. PUTNAM. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LAHOOD).

(Mr. LAHOOD asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LAHOOD. Mr. Speaker, I want to express my thanks to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BONILLA) and to the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAULO). This is a very good bill. I am privileged to be on this subcommittee and to serve with two distinguished leaders, the gentlewoman from Connecticut and the gentleman from Texas. They both have worked very hard together. This is a very good bill for agriculture. It is a very good bill for our farmers. I represent farmers in central Illinois who produce a lot of food and fiber for the world, particularly corn and beans.

One of the things that the chairman and ranking member have done has also really put a lot of emphasis on the research title, providing the research dollars to places like the University of

Illinois in Champaign and to the ag research lab. I have one of the four ag research labs in the country in my hometown of Peoria. They do great work there. They collaborate with many different people in the community to really think outside of the box about how we take the food and fiber that we produce and the commodities we produce and stretch them into many different opportunities for farmers, and also for researchers. We have some of the smartest people that work in the ag research lab in Peoria. They could not do their work without the kind of dollars that are provided through this bill. The chairman has really done an extraordinary job in working with all the members of the subcommittee and the committee, really, to reach out and try to provide the dollars that are necessary.

This is a very good bill for agriculture. It is a good bill for America. I ask all Members to support the rule and ultimately to support the bill.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

I thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BONILLA) and the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAULO) for this bill which I think is a good bill despite an unsatisfactory allocation. I think this bill deserves support by all our colleagues. However, I would respectfully suggest that this Congress in the future focus more on alleviating hunger and poverty in this country.

Yesterday was National Hunger Awareness Day. There were thousands of people that descended on Capitol Hill from all over the country urging Congress to do more. I hope we will do more. They are right. There is much more for us to do.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. PUTNAM. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

I thank the gentleman from Massachusetts for his comments. His passion for ending hunger in this country is laudable. This is a fair rule. It is an open rule. With the exception of those amendments that are legislating on an appropriations bill, anyone can come down here and have the opportunity to make their case for changes. So while Members have been here expressing frustrations about certain policy issues, there has been widespread agreement, including from the gentleman on the Rules Committee and including from the distinguished ranking member of the Committee on Appropriations and the ranking member of the subcommittee. There has been a general agreement of support for the underlying bill that the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BONILLA) has produced. I am glad to see that type of bipartisan cooperation that has not been given the credit that is due here in Washington.

This is a great bill for America's resources and for the conservation element that America's farmers and ranchers are so vital in participating

in. It provides the necessary framework for disaster programs and commodity programs that allow us to continue to provide the safest, cheapest, most wholesome food supply in abundance in the world with a very small percentage of our population; and it allows us to continue to be in the forefront of technology and research and development, continuing to be on the cutting edge of having greater production, greater yields on fewer acres in the most environmentally conscious manner possible, in addition to dealing with our nutrition issues, our women, infant and children issues and school lunch programs and the other important issues for our underserved in this country.

It is a great bill, Mr. Speaker. I encourage this entire House to support the rule and the underlying bill.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The previous question was ordered.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

RESIGNATION AS MEMBER OF COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PUTNAM) laid before the House the following resignation as a member of the Committee on the Judiciary:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, June 8, 2005.

Hon. J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

I am respectfully requesting that you accept my resignation from the House Judiciary Committee, effective immediately.

Thank you for the opportunity to be a member of the committee.

Sincerely,

ADAM SMITH,
Member of Congress.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the resignation is accepted.
There was no objection.

ELECTION OF MEMBERS TO CERTAIN STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Democratic Caucus, I offer a privileged resolution (H. Res. 307) and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 307

Resolved, That the following named Members be and are hereby elected to the following standing committees of the House of Representatives:

(1) COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY.—Ms. Wasserman Schultz.

(2) COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE.—Mr. Moore of Kansas.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BONILLA. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 2744 and that I may include tabular material on the same.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2006

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 303 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 2744.

The Chair designates the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. RYAN) as chairman of the Committee of the Whole, and requests the gentleman from California (Mr. ISSA) to assume the chair temporarily.

□ 1224

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 2744) making appropriations for Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2006, and for other purposes, with Mr. ISSA (Acting Chairman) in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered as having been read the first time.

Under the rule, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BONILLA) and the gentleman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BONILLA).

Mr. BONILLA. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to bring before the House today the fiscal year 2006 appropriations bill for agriculture, rural development, the FDA and related agencies. As many people know, this bill does not just fund agriculture issues that are so important for the Nation and the world but also funds the Food and Drug Administration, the Women, Infants and Children program, and the food stamp program. There are a wide variety of issues that are very significant to this Nation and the world.

This is a bipartisan bill, Mr. Chairman. I am very proud this year to have worked for the first time with the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO), who was a great partner in putting this bill together, as are all the members of the subcommittee. This is

a great subcommittee that comes to the table every day with sometimes differences of opinion, but at the end of the day want to get a bill done. As chairman of this subcommittee, it has been a very fulfilling experience to have gone through this process with this great group.

We have difficult challenges every year when we put this subcommittee mark together and when we put the bill together. We had over 2,100 individual requests from Members; so with the good staff that we have that I will get into a little more later, we have had to go through with a fine-tooth comb every request to make sure that it does not overlap with another request and then to prioritize all of these very important issues that come from Members all over the country.

I would also like to thank the staff for working on this. I want to take a moment to mention some very important names who have worked on this bill, sometimes day and night and on weekends as well: Martha Foley of the minority staff; and Maureen Holohan, Leslie Barrack, and Jamie Swafford of the majority staff. In addition, I want to thank our detailee Tom O'Brien and Walt Smith from my personal staff; and, of course, my distinguished clerk, Martin Delgado, who does a fabulous job on this bill. I also want to take a brief moment to recognize Joanne Perdue who worked on the committee for several years and retired from the committee just this past month.

Mr. Chairman, I would also like to point out just in very broad terms that this bill takes care of a lot of issues that are critical not just to agriculture producers but to consumers in terms of food safety, research projects that are going on in every State in this Nation. A lot of people go to the grocery store, Mr. Chairman, and they see that big truck pulling up in the back of the store and unloading goods that are put on shelves and in the freezers at the local grocery store and their products that are sold at a high quality for a good price. Quite frankly, most Americans do not know all of the policy and all of the research and all of the hard work that goes into putting that product on the shelf so that Americans can go into the store, use those coupons and enjoy themselves and the quality of life that it brings to Americans all across the country. Again, there is a lot of detail that goes into putting this bill together.

I am also very proud to work hand in hand with the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE), our authorizing chairman, who has been a partner in this process not just this year but every year. So all of these policies and all of these programs that I am talking about here have been a team effort.

Mr. Chairman, I include at this point in the RECORD the following tabular material related to the bill: